

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SCCT-01 DHA-02 TRSE-00 AID-05 /077 W

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R 162024Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0876

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 7965

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CI

SUBJECT: CHILE: HARASSMENT OF EX-PRESIDENT FREI

REF: SANTIAGO 7800

1. CHILEAN PRESS AUGUST 16 PROMINENTLY PUBLICIZED BIZARRE ATTEMPT TO HARASS EX-PRESIDENT EDUARDO FREI DURING A DINNER GIVEN FOR HIM AND THE LOCAL FRENCH AND NORWEGIAN AMBASSADORS AUGUST 13. HOST WAS OSCAR PINOCHET DE LA BARRA, FONOFFICE UNDERSECRETARY IN FREI'S ADMINISTRATION AND FORMER AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW AND TOKYO. DINNER WAS ONE OF A SERIES FREI HAD BEEN QUIETLY ARRANGING: POPPER HAD ATTENDED ANOTHER EARLIER LAST WEEK.

2. AS DESCRIBED TO POPPER BY NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR NILSEN, EVENING HAD A JAMES BOND FLAVOR. ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALL WAS RECEIVED WARNING PINOCHET THAT BOMB WAS BEING PLACED IN FREI'S CAR OUTSIDE. EMERGING FROM HOUSE, MEMBERS OF DINNER PARTY FOUND A BOX-LIKE PACKAGE CLEARLY VISIBLE ON WINDSHIELD OF FREI'S CAR, PARKED BETWEEN THOSE OF THE TWO DIPLOMATS. FURTHER SEARCH DISCLOSED A SIMILAR DEVICE AT ENTRANCE TO HOUSE. POLICE (CARABINEROS) WERE CALLED, SENT DEMOLITION SQUAD, DISMANTLED PACKAGES WHICH CONSISTED OF TICKING DEVICE (PERHAPS CLOCK) AND WIRES AND OTHER MATERIAL. SQUAD FIRED INTO MATERIAL TO DISCHARGE ANY EXPLOSIVE. THERE WAS NONE.

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3. PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT STRESSED POLICE WERE INVESTIGATING THE INCIDENT AND NOTED THAT FACT THAT PACKAGES WERE PLACED IN VISIBLE LOCATIONS DEMONSTRATED CLEAR INTENT TO ALARM THE FREI PARTY.

4. DINNER GUESTS CONCLUDED THAT INCIDENT WAS WORK OF EITHER DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE (DINA) OR EXTREME RIGHT-WING ORGANIZATION PATRIA Y LIBERTAD. (WE HAVE HAD NO INDICATIONS OF ANY RECENT ACTION OF THIS SORT BY PATRIA Y LIBERTAD.)

5. COMMENT: IN DINNER WITH AMBASSADOR POPPER, FREI COMMENTED ON OFFICIAL HARASSMENT OF LEADING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (PDC) PARTY MEMBERS, BUT DID NOT MENTION ANY AGAINST HIMSELF. WE THINK IT LIKELY THAT DINA SOMEHOW LEARNED OF THE FREI DINNERS (THOUGH NEITHER OF THE TWO WE KNOW ABOUT WAS ARRANGED BY TELEPHONE) AND DECIDED TO REACT IN THIS WAY. GOC OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO PRESS ATTRIBUTED EPISODE TO "ELEMENTS CONTRARY TO THE GOVERNMENT" WHICH WERE TRYING TO DISTURB PUBLIC ORDER. WHILE IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, THIS VERSION SEEMS RATHER IMPROBABLE, SINCE IT ASSUMES THAT LEFT-WING ELEMENTS HAVE A FAIRLY WELL-DEVELOPED INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM. DEPARTMENT MAY RECALL THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE SUBJECT TO SIMILAR BOMB HOAXES DURING THE ALLENDE PERIOD.
POPPER

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